

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 17225 141340Z

43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAM-01 SAI-01 EB-04 COME-00 TRSE-00 FRB-01

OPIC-03 CU-02 /067 W

----- 105663

R 141008Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4549

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MADRID

USMISSION OECD

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 17225

E.O. 11652: N/GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, PO

SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE MINISTER COUNSELOR'S VIEWS ON CUNHAL
VISIT TO MOSCOW; SOVIET-PORTUGUESE RELATIONS

REF: MOSCOW 16803 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. DURING A COURTESY CALL ON DCM PORTUGUESE
COUNSELOR ANDRADE SAID THE CUNHAL VISIT HAD CONTRIBUTED TO
LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR NORMALIZATION OF SOVIET-
PORTUGUESE RELATIONS BUT STRONGLY IMPLIED THE TALKS HAD PRO-
DUCED NO MAJOR BREAKTHROUGHS ON BILATERAL TRADE.
ANDRADE SAID LISBON'S POLICY OF NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH
EAST EUROPE SHOULD NOT BE SEEN AS IN ANY WAY WEAKENING
PORTUGAL'S TRADITIONAL TIES WITH FRIENDS IN THE WEST. END
SUMMARY.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MOSCOW 17225 141340Z

2. ANDRADE MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS ABOUT THE RECENT PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENTAL DELEGATION'S VISIT TO MOSCOW:

(A) CUNHAL HAD BEEN SELECTED TO HEAD THE PORTUGUESE DELEGATION BECAUSE LISBON FELT ITS FIRST OFFICIAL DELEGATION WOULD BE BEST RECEIVED IF LED BY A FIGURE WHOM THE SOVIETS KNEW AS FRIENDLY. CUNHAL, THEREFORE, WAS CHOSEN IN PREFERENCE TO SOMEONE WITH WHOM THE SOVIETS WERE UNACQUAINTED OR WHO HAD A REPUTATION WHICH MOSCOW MIGHT HAVE REGARDED AS HOSTILE.

(B) THE VISIT PRODUCED AGREEMENT THAT A BILATERAL ECONOMIC AND TRADE AGREEMENT IS "TO BE NEGOTIATED."
(ANDRADE REPEATED THIS PHRASE TWICE.) TALKS WILL PROBABLY TAKE PLACE IN DECEMBER. THE PORTUGUESE HOPE TO DEVELOP THEIR EXPORTS TO THE USSR BUT LISBON HAS "NO ILLUSIONS" ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRADE WITH MOSCOW. PORTUGAL IS WELL AWARE THAT THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY OFFERS THE BEST HOPE FOR PORTUGAL. EVEN THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST PARTY - DESPITE OPPOSITION FROM SOME RADICAL ELEMENTS - IS AWARE OF PORTUGAL'S GEO-POLITICAL POSITION AND HAS SUPPORTED CONTINUATION OF PORTUGAL'S ASSOCIATION WITH THE EEC. (ANDRADE IMPLIED THE SOVIETS HAD SHOWN UNDERSTANDING ABOUT PORTUGUESE RELATIONS.)

(C) THE CULTURAL AGREEMENT WHICH THE SOVIET-PORTUGUESE COMMUNIQUE MENTIONED WILL BE "SIMILAR TO SOVIET CULTURAL AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES."

((D) GENERALLY THE CUNHAL VISIT HAD BEEN QUITE SUCCESSFUL AND CONTRIBUTED TO LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR NORMALIZATION OF SOVIET-PORTUGUESE RELATIONS.

3. SPEAKING ABOUT SOVIET-PORTUGUESE RELATIONS IN GENERAL, ANDRADE SAID HE HAD DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING EXPRESSIONS OF "SURPRISE" AMONG SOME OF HIS WESTERN COLLEAGUES ABOUT THE "RAPIDITY" WITH WHICH THE NEW SOVIET RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPING. HE CONCEDED THAT THERE HAD BEEN A RATHER RAPID FLURRY OF CONTACTS BUT SAID HE THOUGHT THIS WAS AN EXPRESSION OF "A NATURAL CURIOSITY" ON BOTH SIDES AFTER 56 YEARS OF NO CONTACT. THERE SHOULD BE NO REAL SURPRISE AT PORTUGAL'S NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH EAST EUROPE, AND THIS SHOULD CERTAINLY NOT BE UNDERSTOOD AS WEAKENING IN ANY WAY PORTUGAL'S TIES TO TRADITIONAL FRIENDS IN THE WEST. MOSCOW WAS INTERESTED IN NORMALIZING RELATIONS, BUT AS THE SOVIETS HAD STATED AT AMBASSADOR NEVES' PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS, THEY EXPECTED

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 17225 141340Z

THE RELATIONSHIP TO BE ONE BASED ON "PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE OF STATES WITH DIFFERENT SOCIAL SYSTEMS."

4. COMMENT: BOTH THE TENOR AND SUBSTANCE OF ANDRADE'S REMARKS SUGGESTED HE WAS SEEKING TO PLAY DOWN ANY IDEA THAT THE CUNHAL VISIT HAD PRODUCED A MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH IN SOVIET-PORTUGUESE RELATIONS OR HAD RESULTED IN OFFERS OR COMMITMENTS ON EITHER SIDE WHICH WOULD INDICATE A MAJOR

SHIFT IN PORTUGUESE FOREIGN POLICY AWAY FROM CLOSE RELATIONS
WITH THE WEST.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC COOPERATION, FOREIGN RELATIONS, MINISTERIAL VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 NOV 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974MOSCOW17225
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740328-0922
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741144/aaaabksb.tel
Line Count: 118
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: MOSCOW 16803 (NOTAL)
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 APR 2002 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <13-Aug-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PORTUGUESE MINISTER COUNSELOR'S VIEWS ON CUNHAL VISIT TO MOSCOW; SOVIET-PORTUGUESE RELATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, UR, PO, (CUNHAL), (ANDRADE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005